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ABSTRACT

This conference address focuses on the social, ethical, and legal issues surrounding the role and function of the child in today's Western society. Topics discussed include: (1) The dynamic social system--changing social expectations for preschool and school children and establishments, (2) Moral/ethican/legal issues some currently critical concerns reflecting societal values re: children, (3) Sex-role stereotypes--how society is maintaining or changing them, (4) The school teacher/child interaction, (5) The family--a disintegrating and diminishing influence, and (6) Mother/infant reciprocity--the earliest formative social dyad. (CS)

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THE CHILD AS PRODUCER IN OR PRODUCT OF SOCIETY

By John H. Meier*

In order to give the reader a gestalt of the structure of this paper, the following outline of principal topics is offered.

I. Society - Writ large as the contextual macrocosm in which serial development must take place.
   - A. The Dynamic Social System---Changing social expectations for preschool and school children and establishments.
   - B. Moral/Ethical/Legal Issues---Some currently critical concerns reflecting societal values re: children.
   - C. Sex-Role Stereotypes---How society is maintaining or changing them.

II. Social Interaction Dyads - Small social units in child's personal microcosm.
   - A. The School--- Teacher/Child Interaction.
   - B. The Family---A disintegrating and Diminishing Influence.
   - C. Mother/Infant Reciprocity---The earliest formative social dyad.

SOCIETY

The Dynamic Social System

With this overview in mind, let us now consider some highly germane remarks made by Yale's Professor Kenneth Keniston, who is director of the Carnegie Council on Children. After spending much of my own professional career researching

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and championing cognitive development in young children, I found the following statements to be very stimulating and somewhat sobering. I have excerpted them most generously both because they say many important things well and because I do not wish to do undue violence to any of them by losing their contextual flavor. Furthermore, they set the tone for and inspired the title of this paper. Keniston entitled his remarks, "'Good Children'(Our Own), 'Bad Children' (Other People's), And the Horrible Work Ethic."

> For 200 years Americans have valued the child mainly as a producer---first on the farm, then in the factory and now as a cognitive whiz. Isn't it time to value our children (and our society) for such qualities as playfulness, imagination and love?
>
> As everyone knows, America's record in child health is abysmal. Especially for children of minority groups and of the poor, our infant mortality rates are a national disgrace. We are the only industrialized nation in the world that has not adopted some policy of direct family support or child allowance. Of all industrialized nations, we have made the least adequate public provision for the care of young children whose mothers work, even though one-third of all mothers with children under six are now in the paid labor force. Even today, significant numbers of American children are malnourished. Mental health services for children are largely unavailable, and our practices with regard to child abuse, foster placement, adoption and the legal rights of children are deplorable by international standards.
>
> Yet we consider ourselves the most child-centered people in the world. Foreign observers have long commented on the preoccupation and solicitude which American parents feel toward their own children. Yet Dr. James Comer, of the Child Study Center at Yale, has said that we can only understand the present by asking why have we not done those things which other civilized nations have done. And Dr. Albert Solnit, director of the Child Study Center, suggested that the most useful question might be: Why do Americans really not like children?
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> . . . . .
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> Ever since the American Revolution, the prevailing rhetoric about children has been dominated by the work ethic....
>
> First, work was seen as the only way of escaping from scarcity and want....
>
> Second, the work ethic presupposed the idea of equal opportunity for the industrious....
>
> Third, the work ethic is closely related to the American vision of this continent as a vast, and unpopulated area (Indians are invisible) which man can exploit to produce wealth. Without the notion of a limitless frontier, of rich land waiting to be "taken" by work, the work ethic could not have flourished.
>
> This ethic has shaped the qualities that have been most valued and feared in American children for 200 years. Parents have been instructed to teach industry, labor, self-discipline, persistence and thrift.
>
> . . . . .

"Good children," then, are above all those who promise to be industrious. "Bad children"---usually the children of other people, of other races, classes, nationalities, or ethnic backgrounds---are idle, lazy, apathetic, undisciplined and lacking in self-control. In other words, they are not industrious....

...The possibility that idleness might promote constructive play, or the development of imagination or fantasy or any virtuous quality, has simply not been entertained until the last 20 or 30 years.

. . . . .

Given the American belief that a man through hard work could rise to the top, it followed that those who remained on the bottom were less virtuous than those on the top....

. . . . .

...There is a pessimistic view of human nature inherent in our work ethic. Again and again, one "vicious companion" is seen as "contaminating" all other children. Rarely was the opposite suggested: that one virtuous child might uplift idle companions.

Implicit in this idea is an undercurrent of Calvinism that sees life and childrearing as an uphill battle against natural sinfulness. Schools, families and special institutions for children were all enrolled in this battle. The desperate fear that surfaces fullblown in Victorians like Anthony Comstock is impossible to understand without the assumption that vice is more fun than virtue. Hence the frantic efforts to "protect the young" from bad books and companions.

. . . . .

...Even today, Americans resist efforts to define the child as other than a productive-industrious citizen of society. Erik Erikson argues that industry is the great theme of later childhood.

. . . . .

Turning to the present, we are entering still another kind of society, one which is knowledge-based and which requires still different human qualities....

What has this meant in terms of the qualities that we deem desirable in children? I have stressed the enduring emphasis on hard work. In the agrarian era this meant hard work on farms and in fields---a kind of muscle power. But with industrialization the meaning of industry shifted, emphasizing what can be called willpower.

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Today the definition of industry is again undergoing a drastic change. In working-class families, the industrial virtues of willpower remain central in childrearing and schooling. But among the aspiring---in middle-class and especially upper-middle-class families---industry has assumed a new meaning. Let us call it brainpower. From a terror of lack of willpower and control, we are shifting to a terrible fear of cognitive underdevelopment. Work is increasingly defined as head-work; our greatest fear for our children is that their cognitive development will somehow be impaired....

...A child who is valued, thought likely to succeed and rewarded by being "tracked" into the higher levels of school, is a child who performs well cognitively. Despite protests from those interested in other aspects of human development, our "intervention programs" with other people's children have stressed with monotonous uniformity the importance of cognitive and intellectual stimulation in the early years. And in middle-class families and schools the greatest terror and most common problem is "the learning problem"....

...Today, from an economic point of view, children are an unlimited liability. They consume large resources, none of which can be expected to be repaid. Whatever payoff a family receives from children must be derived from the intrinsic satisfaction that adults derive from the process of rearing children. Thus children have shifted during two centuries from being a source of free labor to being a source of income and social insurance to being an economic disaster.

. . . . .

...Our current definition of industry in the young leads to our national obsession with reading scores, I.Q., cognitive stimulation, reading readiness, learning disabilities, intellectual impairments and so on. In human terms this means that children who are equipped by environment, parental training or heredity for success in the cognitive rat-race are most highly valued, while those with other skills are relegated to the bottom of the human scrap heap.

Thus we run the risk in America today of having only one hierarchy of human value: cognitive ability. With this approach both individuals and society pay a high price. Even for those who play the cognitive game well, the price is too often an atrophy of other human qualities which I suspect are, in God's eyes, far more important: morality, kindness, empathy, feeling, joy, imagination, playfulness, grace, artistic ability---to say nothing of love. And the price paid by those at the bottom is all too well known---children who by second grade have accepted the label of "losers" and who carry it with them forever.

. . . . .

...At the Carnegie Council we differ from Michael Young's negative utopia of a meritocrary in which each person's position will be determined by his I.Q. Our alternative vision is still vague, but some of its components are clear. It is a vision of a society which, without deprecating work, would place equal emphasis on other human qualities such as love, care, compassion, grace and imagination.

It would be a society where the lip service that we now give to the unfolding of individual talent in children would be concretely embodied in families and neighborhoods, child-care centers and schools. It would be a society where, instead of asking how good children were at schoolwork, we sought to cultivate whatever was strongest and deepest in them and in their cultural tradition, whatever would enable them to be most fulfilled and of greatest use to their fellows. It would necessarily be a society re-structured in many ways radically different from our own.

Thus I end where I began. Our research so far has perhaps done little more than teach us that children are a reflection of the society in which they exist: that the ways in which we care for them (or fail to care for them) reflect the deepest assumptions of our society, and that it is not possible to imagine a society that cared more tenderly for its young without also imagining a society that was more humane and caring to those who are not young (Kenis-on, 1974, pp. 6-19).

The preceding excerpts underscore the fact that our children are considered to be products of and producers in any given society. It is clear that our children are regarded as our products and are being prepared to produce the future social order. Yet, in a period of double-digit inflation and an altered estimate of the future productivity of these children insofar as supporting the family unit is concerned, there has been a concomitant cutback in child production. It is apparently easier to sell the concept of zero population growth (ZPG) on such an economic basis, unfortunately reflective of conventional American wisdom, than it is to sell it on an ecological or humane basis.

Moral/Ethical/Legal Issues

The mores or customs of a society reflect what its people value as being conducive to the welfare of the society and the ethics of the society state the standards of conduct for conforming with the mores. In order to codify, prescribe, and ensure certain kinds of ethical conduct, laws may be enacted and enforced. As a member of a highly advanced civilization what do you think is ethical with respect to keeping other people's handicapped infants alive? If the infant is your own or your daughter's (or son's)? If the infant has a severely damaged brain? Disfigured body? Spina Bifida? Is deaf and blind? Is likely (at high risk) to be retarded? Is the fourth child of a mother who has badly battered her previous three? Is genetically highly predisposed to Tay Sachs disease, Sickle Cell Anemia, Dyslexia, etc.? Only last week we had a case similar to one you may be aware of wherein an infant was born having Down's syndrome and several other congenital disabilities requiring various extraordinary life-support procedures. The parents and attending physicians agreed to withdraw the life support systems and allow the newborn child to die. An advocate for the infant persuaded the court to take legal custody of the child long enough for the necessary medical and surgical procedures to be performed and then to return the child and the hospital bill to the parents. How

would you feel as parent, physician, judge, infant????

The following summary of a similar case is instructive regarding some of these moral/ethical issues:

> Maine Medical Center v. Houle--Civ. Act. No. 74-145
> Superior Court, Cumberland, Maine (Feb. 14, 1974)
>
> On February 14, 1974, a Main Court issued a landmark decision in this case granting intervention of the Court between the parents of a new born handicapped child, the hospital, and the attending physician.
>
> The male child was born February 9, 1974, at the Maine Medical Center. Medical examination revealed multiple handicaps--the absence of a left eye, a rudimentary left ear with no ear canal, a malformed left thumb, and a tracheal esophageal fistula. This latter condition prevented the normal taking of food as it allowed entry of fluids into the child's lungs which led to the development of pneumonia and other complications. Therefore, intravenous feedings were necessary. The recommended treatment was surgery to repair the tracheal esophageal fistula.
>
> Prior to February 11, 1974, the child's father directed the physician not to perform the surgery and to stop the intravenous feedings needed to sustain life. On February 11th, the Court issued a Temporary Restraining Order authorizing such measures needed to maintain the child in a "stable and viable condition and restrained the defendants (parents) from issuing any orders, which, in the opinion of the attending physician, would be injurious to the current medical situation of said child."
>
> Between February 11th and February 14th, the baby's condition deteriorated to the point that devices were used to artificially sustain respiration and convulsive seizures of unknown cause occurred. Also, further medical examination revealed that the right eye lacked response to light stimuli, the existence of some non-fused vertebrae, and the "virtual certainty" of brain damage to some degree.
>
> These developments caused the attending physician to form the opinion that all life supporting measures should be withdrawn as even with surgical correction of the tracheal esophageal fistula the child would suffer from some degree of permanent brain damage. After hearing this testimony as well as that concerning the mother's emotional condition and attitude toward the future survival of the child, the Court stated that "it is the firm opinion of this court that questions of permanent custody, maintenance and further care of the child are for the moment legally irrelevant. Quite literally the Court must make a decision concerning the life or death of a new born infant." The Court went on to say that recent Court decisions cast doubts upon the legal rights of an unborn child "<u>but at the moment of live birth there does exist a human being entitled to the fullest protection of the law. The most basic right enjoyed by every human being is the right to life itself.</u>" (Emphasis added)

The Court stated that parents have a considerable degree of discretion when the condition of a child does not involve a serious risk of life and treatment does involve this risk. However, in this case measures are not involved which would risk the child's life and the issue is the doctor's opinion that probable brain damage has rendered life not worth preserving. In the Court's opinion, "the doctor's qualitative evaluation of the value of the life to be preserved is not legally within the scope of his expertise. The issue before the court is not the prospective quality of the life to be preserved, but the medical feasibility of the proposed treatment compared with the almost certain risk of death should treatment be withheld."

Therefore, the Court found that the defendants had no right to withhold treatment and to do so would constitute neglect. The Court ordered the guardian ad litem to consent to the surgical correction of the tracheal esophageal fistula and any other life supportive measures as might be required. The Respondents were enjoined from issuing any orders to the Petitioners which, in the opinion of the attending physicians, would be injurious to the condition of the child. Furthermore, the Court retained jurisdiction to determine any further measures that might be required and for the purpose of determining the future custody of the child if necessary.

(Postscript--On February 24, 1974, the child died at the Maine Medical Center.) (Newsline, 1974, pp. 4-6)

If the children produced today will produce the society tomorrow, what kind of children should we produce? Paraphrasing the late President John F. Kennedy, is the greatness of a society to be measured in accordance with what it does for its weakest citizens, the young, the handicapped and the elderly? If you are pregnant and have had an amniocentesis procedure performed and it reveals that some serious chromosomal anomalies exist in your unborn baby, which is presumably still less than 20 weeks old, would you elect to have an abortion performed? Suppose the mother is an unmarried, impoverished 14-year-old who is not physiologically or psychologically or financially ready to bear and rear a child? Suppose the mother is your daughter? Why is it that our society issues licenses for driving an automobile, for operating a day care center, for hunting and fishing, all presumably to protect living beings, and yet does not exact any certification of at least a minimum amount of knowledge and skill with respect to giving birth to the most precious of our national resources?

An encouraging effort in an enlightened direction is that sponsored by the National Consortium for Early Childbearing and Childrearing. This organization is attempting to reach the many prospective and actual teenage mothers. Most of these young girls do not have even minimal knowledge and skillsabout child growth and development and yet many are highly likely to be conceiving and giving birth to children in the near future if they haven't already. By influencing the local county commissioners, school board members, and other school and agency staff members, it is hoped that a more humane attitude toward the teenage mother will at least attenuate the terrible stigmata still attached to this condition in many communities. Of even greater importance is the information dissemination efforts of this Consortium and other similar groups to educate teenage girls, and boys, about childbearing and childrearing and its many long-term responsibilities.

The National Center for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect has recently been established in Denver under the direction of University of Colorado Professor of Pediatrics C. Henry Kempe, who did much of the pioneer work on and coined the term "battered child sundrome." This National Center along with the U.S. Humane Society, also headquartered in Denver, reflect promising beginnings of efforts to zero in on an alarmingly wide-spread practice. New national legislation and new programs in the Office of Child Development and in other federal agencies, have also contributed to the growing public awareness and large scale efforts to combat this inherently repulsive phenomenon in the United States. The repugnant realities of visible physical abuse to helpless infants is perhaps the most dramatic and pernicious form of child abuse, which has been simply defined as any nonaccidental injury to a child. However, when the condition of child neglect is addressed, it is far more difficult to define and to marshall supportive sentiments for legal intervention to

attenuate or prevent its undesirable effects upon child growth and development.

Kagan's preceding keynote address at this NAEYC Convention made a compelling argument for the inherent resilience in the developing human. The research he reviewed does hold out some hope even for the abused and/or neglected infant. Evidence of the inevitable unfolding of certain cognitive structures and intellectual abilities, which may compensate for or overshadow the effects of traumatic and/or deprived earlier experiences, is not only reassuring but perhaps dangerously seductive. Undue reliance upon this phenomenon is what prompts some physicians, parents and other caretakers of young children to hang onto the pious hope that a delayed child will grow out of it. And, in fact, some of these euphemistically labeled late bloomers do catch up. On the other hand, child development centers like ours are all too frequently presented with children who have been abused or neglected in one or more developmental domains and whose central nervous system deterioration or personality disintegration or emotional disturbance has so crystallized or progressed beyond the point of being responsive to treatment as to render most interventive efforts essentially futile. It has been stated that most of us do not use much of our available cognitive capacity; it may be a bit like the iceberg of which we only see 1/9th above the surface. I would submit that we are in fact now living in the initial stages of a society described by Toffler in his book entitled Future Shock, and that we are in face experiencing a sort of IQ inflation whereby it takes more IQ points to cope satisfactorily. With this aforementioned IQ inflation phenomenon, it may become increasingly important to have a brain of full capacity and integrity. Nonetheless, it is known that such neglect as represented by malnutrition, or understimulation, or environmental under-enrichment do adversely and irremediably affect brain growth and development. Such deprivation apparently reduces the ability of the brain to perceive,

t[illegible]tore, and to process complex data. And just as genetics place limitations upon what a given species or member of a species is able to do, these early neglectful determinants significantly reduce the core storage and data processing capacity in the human computer. Where else can you find a computer that has over 10 billion flip-flop circuits, occupies less than a cubic foot of space, is completely mobile, will operate on the energy of a peanut for up to four hours, and is produced with unskilled labor?

I have already taken some exception with the notion that any couple should be allowed to produce a child regardless of their lack of knowledge and skill. It seems that we, the society, should ensure greater skill in the parenting ones who play a central role in programming these computers which have such magnificent capacilities and potential impact on the future.

However, regardless of who is the child-computer programmer or the programmee, it seems most important that we not become complacent over the remarkable resilience in the human organism, even if it can be reprogrammed or resiliently bounce back in certain isolated cognitive dimensions with a sufficient dosage of the tincture of time. One thing that we as parents tend to do is to interact with our children in the same fashion as our parents interacted with us. This simply indicates that we behave as we were programmed and much of our parent-to-child interactive programming is limited to the examples our own parents set. Thus, is it any surprise that significant numbers of battered children show some of their resilience by becoming battering parents of their offspring? Significantly higher numbers of battered children than would occur by chance alone subsequently become juvenile delinquents, adult criminals, school dropouts, and otherwise members of the human scrap heap.

Of course, we should be grateful for the evident resiliency in the human, but it is inconscionable and simplistic to sit on the sidelines and watch cognitive deterioration occur and this almost always leads to defective functioning

in other developmental domains. Those who do not learn to read at all or well enough to stay with their peers also contribute a disproportionately large number to the rolls of juvenile delinquency, early school drop-outs, and if not subsequent criminal activities at least drastically reduced self-fulfillment. When our peers can't handle the "3 Rs" they turn to the "3 Bs": booze, broads, and ballads. Contemporary youth have chosen the more sophisticated "3 Ds": drugs, delinquency, and dropping-out. A commentary on this trend is found in the following limerick developed about dyslexic children:

There once was a boy with dyslexia,
Who met a young girl with dyspepsia.
His trouble was books,
Her trouble was cooks,
So they solved their problems with sexia.

The innocent and frequently inadvertent offspring of these pleasure-seeking frustration flings are the products of today's generation and the producers of the next stages of the social evolution out of which social development emerges.

In reviewing Kagan's accounts of his cross-cultural studies involving Guatemalan children and in light of Keniston's pleas for greater humanism, it is interesting to cite some of Kagan's remarks.

> I want to see schools begin to serve the needs of society. Ancient Sparta needed warriors, Athens needed a sense of the hero, the ancient Hebrews needed knowledge of the Testament, nineteenth-century Americans needed managers and technicians---and the schools responded beautifully in each case by providing the kind of people the society needed. What do we need now? I believe that we need to restore faith, honesty, humanity. And I am suggesting in deep seriousness that we must, in the school, begin to reward these traits as the Spartans rewarded physical fitness. I want children rank-ordered on the basis of humanism as we rank-order on the basis of reading and mathematics. I'm dead serious. When I was a kid, deportment was always a grade. In a funny way, I want that, but instead of deportment, I want him graded on humanism: How kind is he? How nurturant is he?

> Every society must sort its children according to the traits it values. We will never get away from that. A society needs a set of people whom it can trust in and give responsibility to for the management of its capital and resources, for the health of its people, the legal prerogatives of its people, the wards of its people. The function of the school system is in fact to prepare this this class (Kagan, 1974, p. 43).

Much has been learned about parental competence, and, in spite of the moderate resilience in parental learning (an old dog can learn some new tricks, with difficulty), some parents or other primary caregivers do not provide adequate nurturance. One of the most acclaimed and encouraging efforts to compensate for parental incompetence is the intervention study conducted in Milwaukee (Heber, et al., 1973). Although it seems perfectly logical that the reason for the child products of mentally retarded mothers themselves becoming retarded to be genetic, The Milwaukee Project has to date clearly and cogently disproved this conclusion. Furthermore, it was disproved with a population of minority ethnic members, thus frustrating other racist claims about the genetic inferiority of various ethnic minority groups. Twenty such children were removed in their early infancy five days a week from their inadequate homes (child production lines) run by seriously retarded mothers in psychologically neglectful if not abusive environments. After five years of intensive and extensive intervention with these youngsters they entered the Milwaukee Public Schools and are continuing to perform significantly better in all developmental domains than their matched control subjects, than their siblings, and even considerably better than their peer group raised in more favorable home environments. This noteworthy social experiment and others like it serve to help define what the dimensions of child neglect are and how they might best be compensated for before it takes its debilitating toll from those products who will be charged with producing our society in the next generation.

Even if the control subjects and siblings do have considerable resiliency, the system itself often lacks flexibility. Often a child is labeled, correctly or incorrectly, upon school entry and classified forever as educable mentally retarded or learning disabled, or emotionally disturbed and, in a prophecy-fulfilling fashion, remains in whatever special class he may be assigned to, if there is one. The school system is frequently not resilient enough to reclassify previously misclassified children, a practice that Hobbs, et al. (1974) have addressed in the new voluminous publication, Futures of Children.

Sex-Role Identification

Sex-role identification plays an essential part in producing the kind of products who have social development among their other indivisible developmental tasks. A major social issue throughout the world has surfaced around the expectations placed upon the child as a result of his or her particular biological sex. From birth until death, the individual is sexually segregated with regard to everything from toilets to toys. In the December 1974 issue of Ms. Magazine Pogrebin makes an eloquent case for eliminating all of the sexually discriminating implications in children's toys. The notion that trains, tractors, trucks, and other toys which coonote strength, power, and activity must carry XY chromosomes is debunked. The encouraging fact that the packaging of toys is now depicting both girls and boys equally involved in all sorts of activities, including science kits, doll play, and domestic occupations as well as occupations in the outside world of work. This is in large part the result of the consciousness-raising done by various women's organizations, and is even reaching the men who manufacture toys and have traditionally decided what is fun for boys and girls based upon the men's own traditional sex stereotypes.

Nevertheless, in our current society, it is still clear that sex stereotypes endure from the delivery room, where a pink or blue gown is appropriately

assigned---and what a trauma it is when the sex is ambiguous. There are cases of pregnant mothers who had committed themselves to breast feed their newborn boy only to ask that the girl, whom they had not been expecting, be placed on the bottle.

In our society it is still better to be a rugged tomboy than a sissified tomgirl (Feinman, 1974). Carrying the question further---that is, why an effeminate boy is more objectionable than a masculine-acting girl---Feinman refers to studies showing that popular concepts of a mentally healthy person (sex unspecified) coincides more closely to the concept of a mentally healthy man than of a mentally healthy woman. The characteristics attributed to a mentally healthy adult woman, e.g., very gentle, dependent, etc., were not considered to be characteristic of a mentally healthy person. This sets off a single standard of behavior for boys, who soon learn that they win approval only when they behave like men even though they have negligible masculine identificants in their early highly formative years. Girls, in contrast, can gain approval by behaving according to general expectations which are masculine, as well as behaving according to female sex roles, exemplified all around them.

Another study (Dinetz, Dynes, and Clarke, 1974) indicated that although 34 percent of the men and 35 percent of the women asked about preference of the sex of their first children said that they had no preference, of those who did have a preference, 97 percent of the men and 90 percent of the women preferred that their first child be a boy, and if it were to be the only child, 92 percent of the men and 56 percent of the women wanted a boy. Over the past twenty years, since 1954, there has been a slight shift with respect to the men's preference when it came to having an only child which has been explained by two factors: 1) economic---with more women working at better jobs, that is being productive and self-sufficient, a daughter is less likely to be a long-term financial liability; and 2) the social political change of the military draft

is still a controversial issue and ma[illegible] it a disadvantage to be male with respect to draft ability and its concomitant threat of early loss of one's sons in war. In the delivery room and newborn nursery, Rubin, et al. (1974) asked parents to describe their firstborn child to relatives. Although the basic data on each male or female infant were comparable, the parents saw the daughters as significantly softer with finer features, smaller, and more inattentive. The fathers added that the daughters were cuddlier whereas the mothers felt the sons to be cuddlier. Thus, even with minimal information about the infant, sex-typing begins at least at birth and affects parental behavior as much as it does child behavior. This reciprocity is further discussed later.

Will, et al. (1974) observed mothers playing with young children and by simply dressing them in pink or blue they were able to get the mothers to treat the infant according to their fixed stereotypes, regardless of the real sex of the child. Even though the mothers agreed unanimously that there were no differences in the way six-month old boys and girls should act, nine out of eleven said they encouraged rough play with their daughters, and ten of eleven said they encouraged doll play with their sons; however, behaviorally they differed systematically as a function of the infant's perceived sex by smiling more at what they thought were little girls, handing a doll more often to little girls, giving a train to the little boys, and in various other ways behaving stereotypically toward them even though they did not recognize the fact.

In order to underscore the continued controversy, it is interesting to note that Gilder (1973) attempts to keep the lilly gilded by means of his new book entitled Sexual Suicide. He vigorously defends the thesis that the differences between men and women are the single most important fact in our human society and that to deny these differences in the name of women's liberation,

marital openness, sexual equality or pornographic consumer materials poses a primary threat to our current social structure. On the other side of this controversial coin, Maccoby and Jacklin(1974) authored a book entitled The Psychology of Sex Differences, in which they dispell a number of the myths about sex differences, describe the realities of the few known sex differences as manifest in all accumulated research and psychological evidence, and discuss the areas of grey where the differences are speculated about but not clearly demonstrated. The Maccoby and Jacklin book make it clear that the differences are far fewer than society's stereotypes would have us believe and the only four major differences pointed out are that males are more aggressive than females, girls have greater verbal ability than boys, boys excel in mathematical ability. Moreover, these measured differences are not described as inherent differences but rather as learned differences, largely a function of social expectations. Extrapolating from several research studies, some of these differences might be a function of a difference between girls' depending more upon left hemisphere brain functioning and boys' relying more upon right hemisphere functioning?

We have now gone from birth to death, really from the womb to the tomb, since it is apparent that even prior to birth there is a strong preference for males. And now that technology such as amniocentesis permits the determination of the fetus's sex and abortion is more readily available, it is clear that indulging the preference for firstborn children being males might have far-reaching affects on the socio-sexual composition of our population. Of course, at the present time amniocentesis is not permitted simply for sex determination and subsequent abortion of unwanted female or male children. What would you do if you had five girls and learned that your sixth pregnancy was also female?

To take the growth continuum one step further, that is from the erection to the resurrection, there are some data indicating that the determination

of sex can be effected by the relative stress in the two parents at the time of intercourse. One preliminary study (Wittels & Bornstein, 1974) even indicated that in cases of rape, where the woman is presumably under greater stress, significantly more boys are produced. The condition of stress in the female parent apparently inhibits the motility or viability of XX sperm prior to fertilization which may be a function of the acid/alkali balance in the vagina. Judging from earlier suggestions that we parent as we were parented, one might somewhat facetiously ask how many of the male products of rape grow up to become rapists? The way in which society treats illegitimate children in general may be sufficiently alienating to promote such later psychopathological behavior in the victims.

As the young child grows older and continues social development along sex role lines, it is interesting to note that even the contents of the beginning readers he encounters have significant sex loadings. In several studies of American primer contents as well as international comparative studies, Blom, et al. (1974), have found major differences with respect to how the main theme of the stories is developed, what its outcome is, and how the boys and girls in the stories are differentially presented. The consciousness-raising that has occurred in the last two decades around ethnic minorities is also occurring now with respect to sex stereotypes, the two being remarkably similar prejudicial phenomena. It is not surprising to learn that the primers which are popular in the United States tend to give the girls in the stories more favorable and successful outcomes. This is true also of Finland, Norway, and Sweden, whereas the favorable outcomes are more equally divided among boys and girls in England, Greece, Iceland, and Scotland and occur more frequently with boys in stories from Denmark, France, Germany, and Ireland. In Russia and England, the presentation of the main characters describes them as more inner-directed than is characteristic of their United States counterparts, who are described as more other-directed. In most of the countries, except in Russia, the boys in the stories surprisingly tend to experience more failure and frustration and

require more help than the girls. Furthermore, there are far more male than female activities depicted in the primer stories and these tend to follow the usual sex role stereotypes, thereby further reinforcing them.

It is even more alarming to realize that as these children proceed on through school they are confronted with additional sex stereotyping which is most flagrantly visible in career counseling (the Strong Vocational Interest Inventory has pink and blue scoring forms). Physical educational, vocational education, and extra-curricular activities such as athletics, cheerleading, etc., perpetuate sexual separation and stereotypes. The highly limited career counseling encouraging girls to go into such work as domestic family activities, nursing, teaching, or secretarial work, is being vigorously contested by the recent 1972 Title IX Amendment to the Higher Education legislation which extends affirmative action to females as well as to ethnic minorities. Thus, even though there are some delightful anatomical and physiological differences, and as Montagu points out a general biological superiority of the female (1968), many of the differences are indeed sheer social stereotypes that unfairly discriminate against and cause subsequent alienation and identification crises in females throughout the world.

Social Interaction Dyads

The remainder of this discussion about social development in the young child is concerned more specifically with the interaction of an individual child with other individuals, be they children or adults. We have already considered once-over-lightly some of the more prominent and pernicious contemporary conformity pressures on the social development of the child found in the social milieu in which he is totally immersed. Although it is instructive to depict the social learning dyads by using communication systems models (Meier, 1973) the scope of this presentation does not permit a diversion along such tangents. As a result of many social forces prevalent in our culture, there is increased

emphasis upon openness in communication between all humans regardless of their relationship. For the child this includes the teacher/child dyad, the several family interaction dyads with parents and siblings, and the most intimate and primary dyad between mother and infant. This second major portion will focus upon interaction in these three areas having gone now from the macrocosm of society writ large to the microcosm of one-to-one interaction patterns.

The School---Teacher/Child Interaction

In a national conference held at the University of North Carolina in the Spring of 1974 programs of early identification and intervention for infants at developmental risk were presented and critiqued. The theme which emerged from the conference presentations underlying the most efficacious intervention was that of optimum interaction. Ironically, this conference was chaired by Gallagher, who more than a decade ago had studied various aspects of classroom interaction, in order to determine better patterns for working with gifted children in groups and in traditional classrooms. Gallagher (1961) demonstrated that through programming teachers to ask more divergent questions it was possible to quantitatively and qualitatively increase the amount of divergent responses from the students. For example, giving the students answers and encouraging them to generate the questions opened up the range of possibilities far beyond the single question/single answer dialogue which is so pervasive in most traditional classrooms. What would be your questions for such answers as "civil rights, equal opportunities, popcorn," etc.?

The emphasis on openness, on being "up-front," has given renewed impetus to the move toward open education and open classrooms presumably to nurture open minds and open hearts or what Allport (1968) would deem open personalities. However, since most teachers and families are more accustomed to closed systems it is extremely difficult to institute a bona fide open learning situation,

regardless of the compelling nature of the rationale for it (Meier, 1973). Moreover, the analysis of the interaction which is typically applied to open classrooms is seldom done with instruments and procedures which are sensitive to the critical social variables. As a result, the more structured classroom patterns tend to fare better on instruments designed to be sensitive to academic achievement. There are now emerging in the literature several studies which have researched critical variables in the less structured or more open preschool programs. The overall findings of Stallings (1974) and Rayder and Body (1974) are derived from asking relevant questions and measuring appropriate variables on a follow-up basis about the learning behavior of children who have experienced relatively open educational experiences. These children show equal achievement and significantly higher levels of positive motivation toward learning than the children in more structured programs. Efforts of Bowman (1974) and Meier and Brudenell (1968) to assess the quality of classroom interaction in such programs reveal the efficacy of open classrooms for enduring learning of the kind suggested by Ekstein's book entitled, From a Learning for Love to a Love for Learning.

On the other side of this issue about structured vs. unstructured early childhood education there is increasing cumulative evidence that the highly structured programs characterized by the systematic application of neobehavioristic principles may in fact diminish the long-range performance and even immediate interest in a given task. The 1974 December issue of the American Psychologist contains an article entitled "Token Rewards May Lead to Token Learning" from which the following citations are drawn:

> ...Although the immediate effect of these programs may be positive, we have trepidations about the long-range value.
>
> Based both on theoretical considerations and on practical experience, we feel that token approaches will do more harm than good when applied in what is an increasingly promiscuous manner. In the words of the unacceptable medical model: The cure may be worse than the disease.

Within the experimental-behavioral approach, there is another growing tradition: the cognitive approach of attribution theory. Attributional theorists claim that how we attribute the casuality of our behavior will in turn determine future behavior. Whether we perceive we are doing an activity for pay or for joy, will influence how highly we will value the activity. An impressive amount of data from attribution type research has accumulated which indicates that giving a reward can have an effect counter to that desired. Giving points, tokens, M&Ms, etc., to a child for learning a lesson will decrease the intrinsic satisfaction of the lesson. The first author, while in his uncritical operant days, had the rare experience of watching his five-year-old son keep his room tidy for several days. In the best of operant traditions, the author gave his son a toy as a reward for tidiness. Not only was the room never voluntarily cleaned again, but a reward was demanded for many other once-routine responses: "Will I get a reward if I give you a hug?" etc.

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...In a typical operant laboratory experiment, rats stop pressing the lever in a Skinner box when the food pellets stop coming. Why? The rats have learned how to earn pellets. They have not learned to value pressing the lever. In the same way, children in a token economy classroom are simply being taught how to earn tokens. Therefore, when the tokens are removed it is hardly surprising that disruptions recur. Once the tokens are removed, the children are on an extinction schedule.

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...In the nine years of clinical work with such populations, it seems that the operant view is most effective in those instances when inappropriate behavior is inadvertently being reinforced.

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...We can use our knowledge of operant procedures to help rearrange the distribution of parents' attention and cookies so that we can be genuinely helpful. Tokens were not necessary for the acquisition of problem behaviors nor for their maintenance; we should, therefore, first search for the "natural" reinforcers of problem behaviors as a significant point of intervention. However, we must also use information gained in the cognitive tradition. The time has come for us to avoid a narrow operant perspective. Operant procedures have their place and their dangers.

Because of the danger that use of tokens will decrease the intrinsic satisfaction of activities, they should be avoided unless there is a real danger to the person or there is no alternative; for example, a child with renal infection and poor urinary training would justify a token-type approach to avoid a fatal renal infection. If a behavior is of low base rate and its occurrence is important, token approaches may have to be used....

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Before extrinsic reinforcers are used, however, the therapist should seek ways by which the intrinsic value of the activity can be increased. As pointed out by O'Leary and Drabman (1971), teachers should look at the interest level of the curriculum before looking to reinforce learning of material that kids just do not like. ...By automatically giving tokens for tasks, although the task will be completed, there is the risk that the intrinsic satisfaction of the task will be decreased. Tokens do lead to powerful learning, but the learning may, in fact, be token (Levine & Fasnacht, 1974, pp. 816-820).

This tends to drive home the argument that the indiscriminate application of behavior modification can in fact be counterproductive over the long run. Clinicians Bettleheim, Dubos, Rogers, et al., continue to challenge the widespread utilization of Skinnerian techniques for shaping children's behavior because of the inherently undignified and dehumanizing long-term effects. Since there is now a rising concern about the quality of day care center and their program standards and since nearly six million children are now attending various forms of day care, it is imperative that planned variations in programming do not exclude open and unstructured settings, which may in the long run most optimally impact the development and learning of young children. It is too seductive to be swept away by sweeping generalizations of program evaluators armed with the wrong or inappropriate methodology and statistics. One is reminded of the book entitled, Figures Don't Lie but Liars Figure or the statement, "All Indians walk single file, at least the one I saw did."

Stallings (1974a and 1974b) has carefully and thoughtfully evaluated numerous compensatory education programs and has cogently marshalled the evidence to demonstrate that compensatory education is in fact working if the results of the programs are compared to the goals and objectives of each specific program. Furthermore, in studying seven federally funded Follow-Through educational models, Stallings was able to establish that the nature of the teacher's behavior makes a considerable difference in the quantity and quality of child behavior in the classroom.

> Stepwise regressions were computed to assess how much of each child-outcome measurement is explained by the classroom processes. These regressions indicated that the classroom process variables were more predictive of the child behaviors, absence rate, MAT Math scores, the Raven's, and IAR Success and Failure scores than were the entering school test scores. These results of the partial correlations and the stepwise regressions provide compelling evidence that what occurs in classrooms does affect child outcomes.

> Our evaluation suggests that it is possible to find out what a teacher can do to bring about desired child behaviors. In the more academically oriented classrooms which use a high rate of drill, practice, and praise and have the children more frequently engaged in reading or math activities, the gain scores on reading and math are higher. These children also take more responsibility for their failure as tested on the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Scale. These findings are supported by the fact that the sponsors which use these processes in their classrooms (University of Oregon and University of Kansas) also have higher scores on these tests.
>
> In the more open, interdisciplinary classrooms, where a wide variety of activities are occurring, a wide variety of materials are available, children can select their own groupings part of the time, and can engage in activities without adults, children have higher scores on the Raven's perceptual problem-solving test. They are also absent less often, and they take more responsibility for their success as measured on the Intellectual Responsibility Scale. They are more independent, cooperate more often, and ask more questions.
>
> All of the relationships between instructional events and the behavior of children that I have discussed today were observed in Follow Through classrooms. The educational practices employed here seem to be resulting in predictable and desired outcomes for the children. On the basis of our findings, we conclude that the Follow Through program of planned variation is being implemented, and that the seven sponsored models considered in this report are each working to the advantage of children---not by chance but by careful design (Stallings, 1974b, pp. 12-13).

Experimentation with establishing responsive environments for even newborn infants has encouraged several of us to develop what are now referred to as "supercribs" (Meier, et al, 1971). The results of infants and toddlers being placed in such autotelic responsive environments have been mixed insofar as actual measurable gains in subsequent preschool and school performance or achievement. This is because it is so difficult to partial out the effects of the supercribs and their various pieces of apparatus from the overall enriched experience that many of the research subjects received in addition and in part as a concomitant effect of the presence of the supercrib itself. That is to say that the parenting persons who observe their infants and toddlers interacting with the enriched autotelic responsive environments observed their infants doing and understanding things in their environment far beyond the parenting one's more meager expectations and consequently raised their expecta-

tions and level of interaction with the infants. Mothers showed more attending and loving care to "competent" infants and the competent infants interacted more fully and reciprocally with the mothers, thereby keeping a cycle of success going at a very pleasant and exhilarating rate. The cliche that nothing succeeds like success was portrayed in the improved and elaborated interaction (Knight, 1973).

It is noteworthy that several studies (DeMyer, 1971) regarding the precursors of autism and schizophrenia in children revealed that a high-failure/low-success ratio may play an important part in many children's emotional disorders. Counterproductive frustration over repeated failures evidently emerges at relatively lower levels of task complexity among those who are prone to subsequent serious mental illness. The low tolerance for ambiguity and complexity apparent in those children whose infancy did not encourage them to deal with sophisticated environments may in part lie at the base of the subsequent breakdown due to information overload and related future shock phenomena.

The Family---A Disintegrating and Diminishing Influence

Practically everywhere one reads, looks, or listens, it is apparent that we are witnessing an historic migration of women from the American home. This means that almost two-thirds of the 32 million women in the work force are leaving behind millions of school-age children, plus some 6 million infants, toddlers, and other preschoolers. As pointed out in the earlier remarks from Keniston's article, we are one of the few western countries which does not give adequate consideration to children. Furthermore, we are one of the few whose employers largely ignore the maternity protection conventions drawn up by the International Labor Organization; these call for full pay, in many instances from the time the woman leaves her job in her last stages of pregnancy to the time when her obstetrician says she can return, usually a minimum of 12 weeks.

Such maternity leave should be granted without loss of job seniority, pension, or any other rights. This change in pattern of American family life, wherein the mother and wife is emerging as an equal partner and provider, is creating a major concern about what we can do in behalf of the children who remain in the home. In an October, 1974 issue of the Pediatric News a report germane to this concern was contained with respect to the worth of day care centers in America. This concern was addressed by many of the persons attending the International Convention of the American Psychiatric Association held in Philadelphia this past Spring which focused its attention upon "The Vulnerable Child." The following are some excerpts with respect to this conference:

> Questions about the worth of day care programs are still unanswered, even though there are now 900,000 children in day care centers in the United States (an increase of 200,000 in just 2 years), many experts noted at the meeting of the International Association for Child Psychiatry and Allied Professions.
>
> Most of the psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and educators seemed to agree that a good day care program was better than a bad mother. They emphasized frequently that there has been too little follow-through with regard to the children progressing from a day care center, between 4 months and 3 years, to a Head Start program, from 3 to 6 years, and on into public school.
>
> . . . . .
>
> The tendency toward increasingly formalized programs is a "drift toward a rigid set of middle class American values" regardless of the nature of the population served by the day care center.
>
> Of the psychiatrists at the meeting, Dr. Humberto Nagera, of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, was the most direct in delineating dangers of inadequate day care to children less than 2 years old.
>
> A good mother-child interaction in the first 2 years of life is probably the best stimulus to development of neural and vascular components of the brain, Dr. Nagera said.
>
> If a day care center provides little more than the kind of staff-child relationship that exists in orphanages, understimulation will result and it may lead to permanently inferior brain structure and function, he warned.
>
> There are now 18,000 day care centers in the United States. Follow-up data are available only from a few that are federally funded...(Work, 1974, pp. 1 & 61).

Again, this early intervention is even more important for handicapped children. As George Tarjan points out, as many as 50% of the estimated five million retarded persons in the U.S. would probably have been classified as normal if they had had the benefit of appropriate early childhood education. Not only could they be experiencing more satisfactory lives but society could be spared the estimated expense of $300,000 to $800,000 to provide their care for this lifetime. This, of course, refers back to the previous resiliency considerations.

Mother-Infant Reciprocity

Studies of interaction dyad between a mother and her infant have been generating increased excitement and concern throughout the community of scholars on early childhood experience. Although in the past most studies have focused upon the effect of the mother on her infant, the reverse of this is indicated by a new book entitled, The Effect of the Infant on Its Caregiver (Lewis & Rosenburg, Eds., 1974) wherein attention of the contributors is paid particularly to the infant's importance as a producer, regulater, and even distorter of the caregiver's behavior. When this interaction deteriorates and becomes mutually malevolent, perhaps exacerbated by the economic liability which niston posits is now represented by each child in the family it is logical and likely that such destructive dyads would lead to an increased incidence of battering and neglect. Thoman and Dennenberg (1974) have demonstrated that mothers tend to hold and generally interact with their damaged infants much less than mothers interact with their normally developing infants. Undesirable mother/infant interaction may be on several levels, some of which may be assessed by the behavioral section of the Brazelton Infant Assessment Scale (1973), some of which may subsequently surface in the form of malnutrition or under-nutrition of the child. Cravioto (1966) studied the effects of undernutrition and malnutrition on a group of children who subsequently developed

perceptual disabilities by the time they were six years of age. Although he was pleased to record that subsequently these perceptual difficulties disappeared, in the meantime the children had been classified as mentally retarded and placed in special education. In many cases this placement becomes a lifelong indictment and, in spite of the resilience attributed to the child's recovering from the perceptual disabilities, one must again ask whether the system or establishment has equivalent resilience to give the developing child equitable opportunities or a second chance.

Kennell, et al. (1974) have revealed some most interesting results of their research with early attachment behavior between mothers and their newborn infants. Their studies indicate that simply placing the newborn in contact with the mother for the first three hours of its life, and encouraging additional contact during the first week, significantly improves the weight gain of the infant during the first year, increases the amount of desirable mothering behavior measured at 12 months, and even improves the quality of language development as assessed at 2 years. This attachment, claiming, coupling and/or bonding behavior between mother and infant is now reaching a zenith of attention, decades after Jackson finally persuaded some hospitals to adopt the notion of having new mothers "room in" the hospital with their newborn infants.

At the University of Colorado Medical Center, where I am pleased to associate with several active researchers in developmental psychobiology, some of the following germane activities with respect to mother-infant interaction are continuing to contribute to the knowledge base. Kaufman (1974) has for several decades been studying the maternal-infant interaction patterns and related social phenomena in two separate species of primates. Besides developing a comprehensive and most useful taxonomy of primate behavior, he has demonstrated that the range of natural parenting behavior is very great indeed and that the

differences between the Pigtail species and the Bonnet species are exemplary. The Pigtail species characteristically have small nuclear family units and, when the mother is removed from the infant, the infant appears to experience the severe separation anxiety and depression described by Spitz (1946). On the other hand, the Bonnet species tends to foster a more extended family wherein abandoned infants are quickly adopted by other mothers in the colony and thrive in their new family situation. The careful monitoring of all physiological and behavioral processes of infant primates has been advanced substantially by Reite, who has developed a sophisticated wireless transmitting system which is sewn under their skin and scarecely impedes their ordinary activities. This permits the recording of the physiological responses correlated with apparent anaclitic depression in infant primates following separation from their mother, without the intrusion of elaborate and cumbersome electronic devices attached with wires and thus restricting mobility and natural activity of the subjects being studied.

In addition to his very significant contribution with respect to depression in human infants following separation from their mothers, Spitz's concern about optimizing mother/infant interaction was expressed when he relayed to us a conversation he had had with Margaret Mead. She told him that she was very concerned that we now have a generation of young adults who, for the most part, had not had the salutory experience of breast feeding, suggesting that this particular generation might have an extraordinary amount of difficulty in fundamental human bonding, having been deprived of one of the most essential early symbiotic processes.

In order to explore the sequelae of inadequate or inappropriate claiming behavior on the part of mothers, Kempe and others have been studying the videotaped initial responses of mothers to their newborn infants in the delivery

room. They are developing some empirically validated predictors of good mothers versus those at high risk of abusing or neglecting their offspring.

In a presentation at Psychiatry Grand Rounds earlier this year, Levine reported the results of his anthropological psychiatric studies in Africa and summarized these by extrapolating several universal adaptive goals apparent in the human species. In descending order of importance they are as follows: 1) striving for sheer physical survival and health; 2) developing the capacity for economic self-maintenance in the adults of the society; and 3) seeking the behavioral capacities for other cultural values such as prestige, self-actualization, wealth, and morality. It can be seen from this hierarchy of adaptive goals, which closely parallel those more detailed ones postulated by Maslow (1968), that the inextricable interrelation of physical, mental, emotional, and social development must be acknowledged.

This annual convention of members of the National Association for the Education of Young Children is bringing to you an elaborate and rich diversity of information concerned with discrete parts of child growth and development, plus efficacious educational practices for supporting this. I hope that somehow you will again pick up the humpty-dumpty young child and put him/her all together again. I further trust that this discussion of the social development of the young child has made sufficient cross references to the related physical, intellectual, and social domains of child growth and development to adequately underscore the notion that we are always talking about One Child Indivisible.

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